

**DISCONTENTMENT AT CHURCH SERVICES.**

This is a question we deem of great importance to all who profess to be disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to a great extent a hindrance to the cause. Our minds have been moved to write an article on this subject from an occurrence which happened in our own congregation to-day; and our thoughts shall be directed especially to our brothers and sisters in our home congregation, and we pray it may do others good also. The weather being very inclement for traveling on foot, the scholars of course for the S. S. would be late getting in, which is nothing at all unusual at this season of the year, and thereby making the S. S. late, but we must say that the lesson was much enjoyed by all who took part, if it was late. The S. S. closed and some little time was given to waiting on the pastor, who had not yet arrived. Concluded to begin service which was done by an ex-pastor, and he had to conduct the services through, as the pastor did not come. Some time was given to preaching. Afterward conference or class meeting which is very much enjoyed by all who love the Lord. Some responded faithfully, but one brother without raising from his seat, said: "I have nothing to say, only the meeting should be closed, and if you are going to hold afternoon services, why announce it for the afternoon," etc. Now all who are candid can see at a glance the spirit and effect of a censure like this. Some say, "I don't like speaking because there is too much dissimulation in it." Now brothers and sisters, why don't you condemn and abolish the kiss of charity, for Christ was betrayed by it? A false pretender to a virtue does not destroy the virtue but the false pretender. So it is with all services of God's house, but to our subject.

Discontentment at church services is a disease as contagious as leprosy and we have not been able yet to discover any vaccination that will entirely destroy the malady. If any one has, the recipe would be invaluable to us here. We will first consider the object or motive which prompts us to attend the services of God's house. I am talking to Christian professors as I said in the beginning. Some go to get back home as soon as possible;

others, because it would not speak well for them as Christian professors to be absent. Some go scarcely at all, some to see who is there, while others go for the sole purpose of worshipping God, in spirit and in truth. Some of the first named are more concerned about their dinner than the worship of God, and the salvation of immortal souls. Such ones say "we love God, and love to attend church," etc., but by close investigation we find that such contribute very little to the church, and then every temporal necessary of life must be supplied first. "First seek ye the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

We will now refer to a few Gospel instances relative to the love we should have for the Lord, and manifest it when necessary. The first will be the feeding of the five thousand. Matt. 14: 14-21. These people were hungering and thirsting after the word. Must we hold the circumstances different from to-day? No. At evening "the disciples came to him saying, the place is desert and the time is already past." Matt. 14: 15. Did the people get mad and discontented because Christ preached all day? Not at all; they did not even ask for food, but for the bread of life, and some of us now cannot wait on the Lord one hour in two weeks without getting so terribly hungry that we must reprove the pastor for holding the congregation the full hour. We cannot even sacrifice one meal for the Lord, and yet we say we love him.

Next will be the feeding of the four thousand. Matt. 15: 32-39. Jesus says "I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me three days and have nothing to eat, and I could not send them away fasting lest haply they faint in the way. Matt. 15: 32. Now brethren and sisters, (I will mention the sisters, for the disease has become chronic with them also) how large a congregation do you suppose the Master would have to-day if he was to preach three days in a desert place and without anything to eat, even if he had four thousand to start with? I fear they could be very easily counted. Or even as the first multitude of five thousand who remained all day without food. Are we

willing to stay all day and listen to the word of the Lord?

In both instances these people were more anxious for spiritual than temporal food, showing by their actions that they wanted the most important part supplied first. Were their temporal wants supplied? Certainly. So will ours be if we have enough faith in Christ, and we have no account that any of these people died or fainted in the way from the sacrifice of the one meal or the three days of food. We consider the four thousand received the greatest blessing, for the greater the sacrifice the greater the blessing. Shall these people rise up in the judgment against this generation and condemn it because they waited long and patiently to the preaching of the Master? God forbid, for the same Jesus said "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18: 20. But how is it to-day? Do the people of God make any sacrifice to get to the church? We would say not near as much as they should, and in some places in which we are acquainted, it is quite a sad thought to see the pastor absent from many of the services. Now how do you expect to enjoy heaven, which is without end, if you cannot be content in his presence and house here for one hour? We cannot; it would be impossible for us to enjoy heaven and praise his name forever and ever, when we have such dispositions. Please note that thought carefully. "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Remember this is a place of trial, and the Lord does not want and cannot make use of anyone who gets discontented in so short a time, nay at all.

In the great day God will only count things possible and impossible, and to those who so easily become discontented we believe that it would suit them much better if there were no services of God's house at all to attend on Sunday. We can go to a public sale or some place of amusement and spend all day without anything to eat. Do you expect the Lord will value such consecration very highly? We believe the church should have more enthusiasm, for a virtue without enthusiasm becomes of no value to them that claim it.

ISAAC INBODY.